

Parenting and Temperament

Have you ever looked at children produced by the same mother and father and wonder how it is that they are so drastically different? Why it is that one child is so driven, competitive and confident, while another may appear to be socially awkward and withdrawn?

Let me ask this question..why do YOU react the way to you do to things, situations and people? In one word...TEMPERAMENT.

Throughout time humans have searched for the “why’s” of mankind’s behavior. Hippocrates was the first to identify “**four types of human beings**”. After this, Plato expanded the theory and echoed the same idea saying that “people can be classified according to four clearly identifiable patterns of behavior”

In more recent times, Carl Jung culminated twenty plus years of research and came to believe that although people are different they share basic common instincts, which influences how they function. Since then it has been the work of Myers-Briggs, refined by the work of David Keirsey. “Colors” then has taken it a step further and made it easily understood by dividing us into a rainbow of human qualities and challenges, driven by a basic nature. This is where we will start.

Temperament as defined by Merriam-Webster as, “*Characteristic or habitual inclination or mode of emotional response*”. Translated that means the “WHY” of what we do.

It is an aptitude and preference set we are born with and that we remain comfortable with throughout our life. It influences everything from learning, to relationships, to potential success. It is the driving force behind behavior. So knowing what drives your children, and what drives you, may help you tailor your parenting style to each child’s individual needs and temperament. While we all are CAPABLE of operating in each color dimension, much like a preference between writing with the right or left hand, we all have a preference, or a way that seems most natural for us to communicate, interpret others communication, react and contribute to the world around us.

Brief description of 4 “Colors”

GOLD – task-driven with an innate desire to accomplish, to be on time (or early), to plan, to create checklists and use them, to be organized, to maintain control and order, to create structure, to be prepared (including having back-up plans), to establish safety and security, and to save money for a rainy day.

ORANGE (opposite of Gold) – an innate desire to take risks, to create, to be innovative, to persuade, to have fun, to rally others and generate excitement, to enjoy life, to be active, to play, to make work fun, to bring happiness to others through laughter, to act spontaneously, to be a visionary, to break rules and to spend money.

BLUE – an innate desire to please others, to listen, to accommodate, to mediate and meditate, to take time to smell the roses, to spend time with family, to nurture others, to be empathetic and romantic.

GREEN (opposite of Blue) – an innate desire to research, find the facts, to gather more information and data, to learn, to be in their heads, to debate topics of interest without being emotionally invested, to desire logic, to deliberate over decisions, to avoid discussions of emotions or feelings and to ask “why?”

These are natural behaviors. When a child's natural behavior doesn't fit with what is expected or preferred by the adults in their world; behavioral, academic and even mental health issues can arise. Because your child's temperament directly affects how they approach daily life including, chores, school work, rules, friendships, decision making, and what they seek in life...just as your own temperament affects you!

When parents understand temperament and their child's natural response to situations, they can stop trying to change the child and work with who they are.

Any combination of colors within a family can create challenging dynamics, and by no means is understanding temperament a "fix all" for struggling families. But taking time to understand and appreciate what drives your child's behavior, as well as your reaction to it, is a giant leap toward greater respect and appreciation between family members. By establishing family norms that address what is unacceptable while understanding the natural behavior of your children, we will reduce conflict, establish better communication patterns and increase levels of trust.

To find out your temperament as well as your child's go:

For adults:

<http://www.parentingbytemperament.com/AdultTemperamentSorter.php>

For children ages 4-8:

<http://www.parentingbytemperament.com/earlychildsort.php>

For children ages 9-12

<http://www.parentingbytemperament.com/MidChildSort.php>

You will be given a set of 4 letters. Here are the corresponding Colors.

The 4 Temperaments

<u>Guardian/GOLD</u>	<u>Artisan/Orange</u>	<u>Idealist/Blue</u>	<u>Rational/Green</u>
Supervisor (ESTJ)	Promoter (ESTP)	Teacher (ENFJ)	Field marshal (ENTJ)
Inspector (ISTJ)	Crafter (ISTP)	Counselor (INFJ)	Mastermind (INTJ)
Provider (ESFJ)	Performer (ESFP)	Champion (ENFP)	Inventor (ENTP)
Protector (ISFJ)	Composer (ISFP)	Healer (INFP)	Architect (INTP)

For additional reading on this subject:

- ✓ <http://www.easternflorida.edu/community-resources/child-development-centers/parent-resource-library/documents/parenting-the-difficult-temperament.pdf>
- ✓ <http://discipline.about.com/od/disciplinebasics/a/How-A-Parent-S-Temperament-Influences-Parenting-Style.htm>
- ✓ <http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/941-temperament-affects-parents-children-family.gs>